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Critical Literature Review
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Causal Factors of Peace in the Antarctic

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Abstract:

The prevalence of peace in the Antarctic is a significantly under-researched field. It is often either dismissed as being due to the isolation of the continent in the international system, or simply hailed as a success of the Antarctic Treaty System. This critical review draws on Felix Martin's assertions that interstate relations alone do not account for peace in conflict-prone regions, and therefore other causal factors have to be considered. It critically examines three perspectives on causal factors for peace in the Antarctic, including states adhering to unwritten rules within the Antarctic Treaty System, structural factors of the Treaty System, and the common goals of environmental protection. It ultimately views these causal factors through the lens of Johan Galtung's conceptions of positive and negative peace, suggesting that the peace experienced by the Antarctic can be considered negative. More work must be done on building mechanisms that promote a robust and stable positive peace to ensure the continent remains free from violence in the coming years.

Contents

Introduction

Peaceful relations between states in a particular region can either be considered predictable or anomalous (Martin 2005). For example, as the variety and intensity of opposing interests in Scandinavian countries is limited, peace is to be expected. On the other hand, relations between Greece and Turkey are characterized by a high degree of competition and opposing interests, and thus the peace experienced between the two states can be considered anomalous (Martin 2005, p. 49). As Felix Martin states "by classifying some cases of interstate peace as anomalous, it is assumed that some dyads in the international system involve sufficient conditions for war to break out, yet interstate peace prevails" (2005, p. 50). The fact that peace prevails in Antarctica is often considered a 'success' of international relations. By labelling Antarctic peace as a success, however, it is implicitly suggested that there is an expectation that violent conflict should have occurred. In such instances where peace is an anomaly, Martin suggests that this peace is dependent on causal factors other than relations between states (2005, p. 50).

There has so far, however, been little scholarly attention paid to the causal factors contributing to Antarctic peace. This is somewhat surprising, for as then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton noted in 2009, "Antarctic is one of the few places on earth where there has never been war" (quoted in Dodds 2012, p. 70). Explanations for this peace are often put down to the fact that Antarctica is an isolated community on the margin of the world (Vicuna 1986, p. 55), or simply accredited to the success of the 1959 Antarctic Treaty (Gilbert 2015). This critical review will closely examine three articles each highlighting differing, though not mutually incompatible, causal factors resulting in the sustained peace experienced by the Antarctic. Julia Jabour in her 2015 article 'Why Has There Been a 'Long Peace' in Antarctica?' uses John Lewis Gaddis's analysis of the Cold War to suggest that Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties (ATCPs) adhere to 'unwritten rules' which has contributed to peace in the Antarctic. In contrast to this, Martin Lee suggests that it is the structural factors of the Antarctic Treaty System that has led to peace in the Antarctic, as argued in his article 'The 1959 Antarctic Treaty: The "Freezing and Bifocalism' Formula' (2000). Finally this review will examine Michele Zebich-Knos's chapter 'Conflict Avoidance and Environmental Protection: The Antarctic Paradigm' (2007), which suggests

that common environmental goals in the Antarctic have been a causal factor for peace. Overall, this is a significantly undertheorized area, and there is yet to be a systematic approach taken by scholars to understanding peace in the Antarctic.

Defining 'Peace'

At its most rudimentary level, peace is usually understood as the absence of war (Martin 2005, p. 45). Using this definition it can be quite logically argued that the Antarctica is the most peaceful place on earth, as, so far, it has remained free from violent international conflict. However this simple dichotomous definition of peace as the absence of war is insufficient in dealing with the complex realities of the international system as it "obscures other possible nuances of the concept of peace, and overlooks the prevalence of complex cases of peace between nation-states" (Martin 2005, p. 46). In his 1969 article 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', Galtung defines two types of peace: negative and positive. Negative peace refers to the above definition of peace as the absence of war and violent human conflict, while the concept of positive peace describes "a condition in which there is relatively robust justice, equity, and liberty, and relatively little violence and misery" (Webel 2007, p. 28). A key trend that runs through the surveyed literature is that peace in Antarctica is exclusively conceptualized as the absence of violent conflict, reflecting Galtung's definition of negative peace. Conceptions of positive peace in the Antarctic, enabled through the development of institutions that promote justice, equity and liberty among states, are largely ignored. This has implications for the future of peace in the Antarctic, for while negative peace can result in short-term stability, there may still be the presence of widespread and pervasive injustice, inequity and personal discord that overall undermines long-term, stable peace, particularly when challenges arise (Webel 1986, p. 29).

Antarctic Peace as 'Long Peace'

In her 2015 article 'Why Has There Been a 'Long Peace' in Antarctica?' Julia Jabour draws on preeminent Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis's five 'unwritten rules' of the Cold War to explain why there has been continual peace in the Antarctic. While acknowledging that this comparison does

not align perfectly, Jabour believes these 'rules' of the Cold War (respect for spheres of influence, harmony through non-militarization, maintaining a non-threatening environment, avoiding surprises, and not undermining the system) are similarly applicable to the Antarctic. Respect for these rules can be considered a causal factor for Antarctic peace.

1) Respect for spheres of influence

With regard to the Cold War, Gaddis argues that peace was maintained by both the United States and the Soviet Union avoiding challenges to the other's 'sphere of influence', or countries in which the other were able to maintain a certain level of control. While neither side publically endorsed the other's right to a sphere of influence, neither did they ever directly challenge it either (1986, p. 133). Jabour cites Article IV of the Antarctic Treaty, explored more in depth subsequently, as analogous to this. Article IV protects the position of all parties in regards to Antarctic sovereignty, and in doing so "clearly permits divergence of positions and therefore tacitly acknowledges the individual spheres of influence" (2015, p. 640). Jabour suggest that "this tolerance can be said to correlate reasonably well with Gaddis's respect for spheres of influence" (2015, p. 639).

2) Harmony through non-militarization

A second key aspect of the Antarctic Treaty is the demilitarization of the region, Jabour stating that "avoiding confrontation of any kind is the end game in Antarctica" (2015, p. 640). The Antarctic Treaty states that "there shall be prohibited, inter alia, any measure of a military nature, such as the establishment of military bases and fortifications, the carrying out of military manoeuvres, as well as the testing of any type of weapon" (Antarctic Treaty 1959, Article I). While direct military confrontation between the two superpowers throughout the Cold War often seemed inevitable, both sides preferred to assert their influence through client states and through 'proxy wars', which Gaddis suggests provided a buffer between the US and the USSR (1986, p. 135).

While harmony throughout the Cold War was achieved by avoiding direct military contact, Jabour notes that harmony in the Antarctic is promoted in three main ways: decisions within the Antarctic Treaty System are made by consensus, all Antarctic facilities are open to inspection, and disputes are settled

by peaceful means. At this point Jabour's argument tends to veer away from Gaddis's thesis, and it is somewhat difficult to see how these two points align. Jabour also fails to offer any explanation as to why the Antarctic Treaty System remains isolated from conflicts between ATCPs outside of the regime, such as the Malvina/Falklands conflict fought between Argentina and the United Kingdom in 1982.

3) Maintain a non-threatening environment

Gaddis argues that peace was ensured throughout the Cold War as both sides implicitly understood that nuclear weapons were to be used only as an ultimate resort (1986, p. 136). Jabour notes that there is a similar 'threshold' in Antarctic affairs – that there is a kind of moral restraint exercised by ATCPs over certain activities (such as mining) that has been encouraged, maintained and protected over the years (2015, p. 643). Arthur Watts suggested in 1986 that "this self-restraint has been made relatively easy in the last quarter of a century [and beyond] because the range of activities in Antarctica has been limited" (p. 72). With increasing human engagement with the continent in the 21st century, however, it will be interesting to see if this self-restraint continues.

4) No surprises

"'Preferring predictable anomaly to unpredictable rationality' was Gaddis's fourth rule," referring to the way in which actors throughout the Cold War tolerated a series of awkward, artificial or unstable arrangements in favor maintaining peace over addressing anomalies (Jabour 2014, p. 643). Jabour links this to the tolerance of ATCPs to anomalous arrangements in the ATS, such as overlapping jurisdiction with other international agreements such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the unresolved issue of sovereignty. This is a particularly salient point, as the fact that ATCPs have for so long accepted the treaty, anomalies and all, "suggests an unwillingness [on the part of ATCPs, in this case] to trade familiarity for unpredictability" (Gaddis 1986, p. 138).

5) Do not undermine the system

Jabour argues that Gaddis's final rule, 'do not seek to undermine the other side's leadership', is applicable for the long peace in the Antarctic as "politeness, respect and trust in dealings, and the goal

of eventual consensus, are the diplomatic hallmarks of the Antarctic Treaty system" (Jabour 2015, p. 644). In this last point, as with the second, Jabour appears to be attempting to fit a square peg into a round hole – Gaddis's point referred explicitly to the leadership teams that made up the White House and the Kremlin throughout the Cold War, while Jabour interprets this as respecting the structure of the Treaty.

Jabour's article provides an interesting insight into Antarctic peace. While several of her key points do not perfectly align with Gaddis's five rules of the Cold War, it is a persuading thesis to suggest that adherence to 'unwritten rules' by ATCPs can be considered as a causal factor to Antarctic peace. An interested area of future scholarship would be attempting to identify a set of uncodified rules specific to the Antarctic Treaty System that ATCPs adhere to, how these might have come about, and how these have changed or might change in the future.

Antarctic Peace through 'Freezing and Bifocalism'

Martin Lee offers a second perspective on the sustained peace in the Antarctic, directly attributing it to Article IV of the Antarctic Treaty. Here, Lee suggests that the structure of the Treaty is a causal factor for peace. In his article entitled 'The 1959 Antarctic Treaty: The "Freezing and Bifocalism" Formula', Lee argues that Article IV enables the contentious issue of sovereignty in the Antarctic to be avoided through 'freezing and bifocalism'. Furthermore, Lee suggests that this approach should be seen as a legitimate mechanism for conflict resolution in the international agreements. This section will examine Lee's ideas of freezing and bifocalism by expounding the issue of Antarctic sovereignty before critically examining these with regard to notions of peace.

The Issue of Sovereignty and Article IV

By the mid-1950s seven states had made territorial claims to the Antarctic, based upon assertions of discovery, exploration and subsequent effective occupation, including establishment of stations and bases inside claimed territory (Dodds 2010, p. 108). Countries that claimed sovereign territory, known as claimant states, were Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway and the United

Kingdom. In addition to the claimant states, the US and Soviet Union were regarded as 'semi-claimants', as while they had not claimed any sovereign territory, they both maintained the basis for future claims (Gilbert 2015, p. 329).Thus, there are three conflicting positions on sovereignty in the Antarctic: those of claimant states, potential claimant states, and nonclaimants.

Lee argues that Article IV of the Antarctic Treaty contains two central limbs: one limb freezing all territorial claims to the Antarctic, reflected in paragraph one, while the second limb ensures that that interests of each different position is protected, reflected in paragraph two (2000, p. 200). This second limb, Less suggests, can be considered an example of bifocalism, "a negotiating tactic of drafting a treaty so that it means different things to different peoples and therefore becomes acceptable to all" (Carol 1983, in Haward and Cooper 2014, p. 60). By drafting the Antarctic Treaty in this way, dealing with the issue of sovereignty was avoided rather than resolved, Article IV thus playing a constructive role in Antarctic governance by allowing ATCPs to work together despite this impasse (Lee 2000, p. 201).

There is little doubt that Article IV of the Treaty is indeed the 'linchpin' – as Dodds suggests, "without it, everything else would have collapsed in a proverbial heap" (2012, p. 64). This still leaves room, however, to evaluate its efficacy as a causal factor of peace. By returning to Galtung's conceptions of negative and positive peace, it could be argued that Article IV provides the basis for conflict avoidance in the Antarctic Treaty System, essentially by appeasing all major positions regarding the issue of sovereignty. Thus, Article IV can be considered as a causal factor leading to negative peace, or the absence of conflict. However, when approached from a post-colonial angle, both Klaus Dodds (2006) and Shirley Scott (2015) suggest that the Antarctic Treaty in general can be considered as an imperial document ultimately undermining conceptions of positive peace based on values such as justice and equity, and thus contributing to instability of the Antarctic regime and regional peace and stability more broadly.

This can be considered in two ways. Dodds notes that the Treaty system essentially protects colonial interests by maintaining an exclusive monopoly on Antarctic governance (2006, p. 63). The Antarctic Treaty System demands that substantial scientific research is conducted as entry criteria, effectively

excluding the majority of the developing world from being involved in Antarctic governance, despite ATCPs claiming to be "parties to a system acting in the interest of all mankind" (Hemmings 2012, p. 153). From a globalist perspective this can be seen as fundamentally unjust and inequitable, and thus, while the Treaty and Article IV can be viewed as a causal factor contributing to negative peace, it also significantly fails to promote ideals of positive peace, sowing the seeds for potential discord and conflict in the future. Scott, furthermore, notes that the Antarctic Treaty fits into a broad pattern of the US consciously choosing to promote, or reject, the development of multilateral treaties to institutionalize its global interests (2015, p. 58). In this light Scott argues that the Treaty can be considered a direct act of US imperialism. Dodds reinforces this, suggesting that Article IV was a 'subtle act of hegemonic power', the US maintaining considerable influence over the continent without having to stake an actual claim (2012, p. 65). Viewed through this lens, it could be considered hegemonic stability is more a causal factor for peace than the structural factors of the Antarctic Treaty (Webb *et al.,* 1989).

Antarctic Peace through Environmentalism

A third perspective on causal factors of peace in the Antarctic is offered by Michele Zebich-Knos (2014), who claims that peace in the Antarctic goes hand-in-hand with environmental management. To demonstrate this, Zebich-Knos uses Conca and Dabelko's conceptual framework of conflict avoidance through environmentalism, ultimately arguing that "environmental cooperation should not merely be considered as low-stake politics, but rather as an important tool that is capable of leading to conflict resolution or avoidance (Zebich-Knos 2014, p. 163). Environmental peacemaking essentially functions through environmental conservation acting as building-blocks that foster trust, cooperation, and ultimately peace between states. Cooperation in environmental conservation and management can generate what Conca and Dabelko describe as 'synergies for peace', in which synergies derive from shared norms and values, resulting in conservation activities being carried out within a peaceful discourse based on mutual concern the environment (2003, p. 23). Thus, Zebich-Knos suggests a shared identity has been fostered between ATCPs based on shared environmental values, built on trust, interdependence and transparency. This collective identity has thus contributed to the formation of solid

transnational linkages that has proved useful in avoiding conflict in the Antarctic (2014, p. 166). Through this framework of environmental peacemaking, Zebich-Knos suggests that mundane conservation activities, such as overseeing Antarctica's trash maintenance it its scientific stations, are ultimately connected to much grander accomplishments, such as the success of the Treaty as a mechanism for peace (2014, p. 165).

While Zebich-Knos views environmentalism as a conflict avoidance mechanism, what she has described is in fact the closest example we have seen of Galtung's conception of positive peace, whereby peace is achieved through the fostering of positive links and mutually desirable values (1986, p. 188). Charles Webel believes positive peace to be superior to negative peace, as it is more likely to lead to strong and durable peaceful conditions within a region, free from both war and violent conflict, but also of pervasive injustice and inequity (1986, p. 28). While being an interesting thesis, however, the idea of Antarctic peace being the product of common environmental goals needs substantially more scholarly attention. An issue raised by Zebich-Knos herself is that frequently environmental standards in the Antarctic are relaxed in favor of maintaining diplomatic relations. In example of this is that when French engineers in Adélie Land began building a new runway that disrupted several large penguin rookeries, the ATCPs chose not to address this misdemeanor under the Antarctic Treaty System (2014, p. 165). This incident demonstrates the readiness for environmental values to be placed to one side to maintain peaceful relations, rather than common environmental values contributing to peace.

Conclusion

This critical review has highlighted three suggested causal factors contributing to peace in the Antarctic, including adherence to uncodified rules, structural factors of the Antarctic Treaty System, and common goals of environmental protection. Overall, however, none of these theories comprehensively explain why peace has reigned in the Antarctic for over fifty year. Furthermore, both Jabour and Lee's theories reflect a single negative conception of peace that is arguably inadequate for considering relations between states in the Antarctic. This field would be significantly enriched by scholars employing extended conceptions of positive peace in the Antarctic.

Julia Jabour has noted that there has been increasing skepticism among academics and the media alike regarding the ability of the Antarctic Treaty system to continue to maintain peace in the coming years, ultimately suggesting that the regime has been found 'wanting' (2015, p. 366). More scholarly attention must be paid to other apparent causal factors of peace in the Antarctic, and how these can be built upon and solidified. Furthermore, the way peace is conceptualized in the Antarctic, and around the globe, must continue to be refined. We cannot merely consider the causes of peace to be the opposite of the causes of war, or indeed that if X leads to war then its absence will lead to peace (Martin 20005, p. 53). Instead, more focus must be drawn to areas such as the Antarctic where peace exists against expectations, and how this peace can be best preserved.

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